

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Subject: Norovirus

Raleigh, N.C. - The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is urging vigilance and awareness surrounding Norovirus, a contagious intestinal illness, that remains prevalent through March.

Norovirus is extremely infectious and can spread quickly in closed places like daycare centers, nursing homes and schools. The virus is primarily passed on via physical contact with contaminated food, liquid, objects or direct contact with infected individuals. Common symptoms of Norovirus include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain.

North Carolinians should continue to take steps that prevent illness from occurring or spreading. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommends the following steps to prevent the spread of Norovirus:

- Use soap and water to wash hands.
- Wash fruits and vegetables and cook seafood thoroughly.
- Do not prepare food for others or provide healthcare while you are sick, and for at least three days after symptoms stop.
- Use a chlorine-bleach solution to clean surfaces contaminated with bodily fluids.
- Wash contaminated laundry thoroughly.

"Healthy individuals usually recover within one to three days at home without medical care, but the very young and elderly are at risk of dehydration and more severe illness," said Nicole Lee, an epidemiologist with the N.C. DHHS Division of Public Health (DPH).

DPH's Communicable Disease Branch works closely with local health departments and long-term care facility staff to implement control measures that limit spread of Norovirus infection.

These steps include:

- Using bleach-based products for cleaning the facility.
- Ensuring that staff don't work while ill.
- Limiting group activities to prevent further spread.
- Encouraging staff and visitors to wash hands with soap and water instead of hand sanitizers.

For more information about Norovirus, please visit:

<http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/norovirus.html>.